Libraries Like No Others: Evaluating the Performance and Progress of Joint Use Libraries

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Abstract

The published and research literature on joint use libraries relates mostly to school community libraries, which are normally combinations of high school and public libraries. That literature often still emphasizes the susceptibility of joint use libraries to dysfunctionality or even failures, although the record of successful combinations is improving because of informed planning and consideration of the requirements for success. Evaluation of joint use library performance and progress is one requirement that is still given little attention in planning and formal agreements. The uniqueness of most joint use libraries also militates against general evaluation criteria and benchmarking. Difficulties in a joint use library, therefore, tend to be unrecognized by its institutional partners until there is a crisis.

Continuous self-evaluation and a commitment to transparent periodic external evaluation will minimize these difficulties and foster joint use library synergies. A joint use library evaluation methodology is outlined. The methodology is focused on internal ongoing formative evaluation using critical success factors. This should be complemented by external five-to-seven-year reviews commencing within three years of a library's establishment.

Introduction

Worldwide there is an increasing interest in governments at all levels in collaboration between different agencies and the most effective outcomes of taxpayer investment in them. Joint use libraries can, properly planned, implemented, and evaluated, represent an optimal example of such collaboration (Amey, 1987, pp. 52–63).

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The published and research literature on joint use libraries relates mostly to school-housed public libraries, or school-community libraries. This is also reflected in the writers' definition of a joint use library, derived from several sources, as one in which two or more distinct library services providers, usually a school and a public library, serve their client groups in the same building, based on an agreement that specifies the relationship between the providers.

Joint use libraries, usually combining a public library with an educational institution library on the site of the educational institution, have existed for nearly a century (Amey 1979, pp. 1–6). During the last forty years, in particular, lessons have been learned about how to ensure their success. One of those lessons is the value of openly and adequately evaluating the performance and progress of the joint use library.

Joint use library variations now include libraries for two or more educational institutions, research institutions, government agencies, and even business corporations. Although the most common type of joint use library is the school-housed public library, a less frequent but increasing variation of the concept is the public library housed in a community college or university. Some of these libraries may involve three or more partners, for example, a combined school, college, and public library. In that sense they are more than "dual use" libraries. There are also now wide variations in the size and complexity of joint use libraries, from a very small rural primary school—housed public library serving only 200 people, to the $177.5 million, 475,000 square feet King Library opened in 2003 and named for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. This initiative between the city of San Jose and San Jose State University in California has been described as "A library like no other."

Since 1990 there have been other major joint university-public libraries developed in Australia, Finland, Latvia, Sweden, and the United States (Bundy, 2003, pp. 135–137). The evaluation issues and proposals raised in this article focus on school community libraries. However, they apply to all types and sizes of joint use libraries.

Advantages of Joint Use Libraries

Experience in joint use libraries, and comparison of them with separate public and other services, suggests a number of advantages against which their evaluation should proceed. A major claimed advantage, and thus an evaluation focus, is the synergy of a joint use service—the whole being greater than the sum of the parts.

The other claimed advantages are economic, social, and educational. Never claimed, however, are the possible political and career profiling advantages to institutions and individuals initiating joint use libraries. Despite its long history, the concept is still often seen as innovative. Joint use libraries should

- represent efficient use of public money: staff costs may be shared between authorities; buildings and facilities may be provided more cost effectively; resource acquisitions may be coordinated to provide savings; operating costs will be minimized and shared;
- provide a greater quantity and higher quality of collections, services, and facilities than is possible with separate services and smaller budgets;
- provide access to more staff than in separate services;
- allow extended opening hours;
- be convenient to users in providing all services on one site;
- permit the collection in one place of archival and local history material of interest to the whole community;
- allow more flexibility in providing and obtaining resources and making innovations;
- provide access to more than one system for support services, for example, professional development;
- promote greater community interaction by providing a community focal point;
- provide greater access to information on community services;
- increase the community's awareness and understanding of current educational practice;
- promote information literacy development and lifelong learning;
- encourage the development of a positive attitude in students toward school;
- provide more avenues for promotion of library services;
- bring different community groups together on the governing board;
- provide a social justice outcome for smaller communities that could not support separate services;
- enhance social capital through increased community engagement.

Planning Success Factors

Experience has shown that the main success factors for joint use libraries are the following:

- A formal agreement endorsed by all cooperating authorities
- The agreement should include the essential items but not attempt to cover all policy issues; the agreement should provide for a mediation process and dissolution of the joint use library with at least one year's notice
- The level of service provided should be equal to, or better than, that which could be provided in separate facilities
- System-wide support is essential, for example, for staffing, professional development, and advice and financial support
- A governing board or committee should participate in the establishment of the service; it should develop ongoing broad policy for its operation and endorse goals and budget priorities

- A profile must be established for each joint use library to define the community to be served
- Provision should be made for the projected growth of the community
- Choice of site is critical; if the site is predetermined and not ideal, extra effort will be needed
- Very good signage is necessary, in the neighborhood and on-site
- Opening hours should meet the needs of the whole community
- Physical facilities should be appropriate to the community
- There should be awareness of the special needs of the community
- Staffing levels should be adequate and the composition of the staff should reflect community requirements
- Staffing and its management should be integrated where possible
- Support structures should discourage too rapid fluctuations in staffing numbers
- The library director should be a professional librarian and have freedom to manage, including having direct control of staff and budget
- The library director should be represented on the senior decision-making and policy bodies of each constituent institution
- Direct two-way communication should occur between the director and funding bodies
- Regular consultation with, and reporting to, all parties concerned should occur
- Ongoing internal, and periodic external, evaluation of the library should take place

The Importance of Evaluation

Internal and external reviews and evaluation of libraries are now common as part of quality assurance processes. Although it appears as the last of the above success factors, evaluation of joint use libraries is even more critical than it is for other types of libraries. In part this is because, as Haycock asserts, "Good management practice means constant evaluation on a formal and informal basis and from both perspectives. Too frequently, one partner, usually the school where there has been a strong programme, gains in service but public library service suffers because it is evaluated not on the basis of what should and can be, but on the basis of what was ('something is better than nothing')" (Haycock, 1979, p. 10).

Yet it is the authors' experience that very few joint use libraries are continuously evaluated because of lack of forethought, complacency about outcomes, discontinuous leadership, or lack of staff time. Nor are many subjected to any form of external review. The unfortunate consequence is that difficulties in a joint use library, the seeds for which may be sown even before it opens, can be unrecognized by the institutional partners until it is too late.

The starting point for evaluation, therefore, should be during the initial planning of the joint use library, not as an afterthought once it is operating and perhaps starting to experience tensions and difficulties. There is little reflection of this important point in the literature, one exception being in the Californian State Library's *Public and School Libraries: Issues and Options of Joint Use Facilities and Cooperative Use Agreements:*

> Assessing the success of the combined library requires comparing before-and-after information. This includes cost, usage, and survey information. While still in the planning stage of creating the library, information should be assembled which can be used after the combined library is in operation. This includes circulation figures for both libraries, program attendance, library visits, and operating costs. A before-and-after community survey can tell much about the success of the operation and about if premerger assumptions were valid. (Berger, 2000, p. 17)

At least one joint use library, California's King Library, has taken this advice to heart and commenced the collection of public and university library data two years ahead of the opening of the joint library. It engaged a consultant in the late 1990s to undertake "before and after" merger studies to be completed in mid-2006. The King Library is also working with the business and psychology faculty at San Jose State University to study library staff response to working in a merged environment, the outcomes of which will be published.

There is also usually no commitment to evaluation in the formal agreements that should be reached before a joint use library is developed. It is not unknown, however, for a library to operate for several years before an agreement is signed by all partners. Yet experience shows that, if agreements are deficient in six major aspects, the development and operation of a joint use library may prove to be extremely demanding and stressful for its staff. Those aspects that should be focused on in agreements are as follows:

- Division of operating costs
- Staffing and staff development
- Information and communications technology
- The leadership and role of the governing board or committee
- Evaluation
- Meeting future space needs

Evaluation is, in one sense, the most important of these because it is the mechanism through which difficulties with the other aspects will become transparent. Ideally, then, a joint use library agreement should specify the following:

- A commitment to developing a methodology acceptable to the governing board for the continuous evaluation of the performance and progress of the library
- An external review of the library involving all stakeholders and user groups three years after it is opened

- How the funding for the review/s will be provided
- After the first external review, reviews every five to seven years

Such provision in agreements has political, operational, and symbolic outcomes in emphasizing a determination not so much to avoid dysfunctionality or failure of the library but rather to optimize its synergies and advantages. Evaluation costs, amortized over the life of a library, will always represent a good return on investment. The above assertions are made by the authors from their experience in reviewing joint use libraries already sliding into a dysfunctional state, threatening the very existence of the library because of no ongoing evaluation and because an external review had been left until too late.

It is also important that every joint use library manager identify, in the library's policy and practice documentation, the requirement for, and approach to, evaluation. Even very small libraries should do so. For example, this was provided, albeit quite basically, by the library of the first of the state of South Australia's network of fifty-six small rural school community libraries. The Pinnaroo School Community Library was opened in 1977, and its policy manual noted that its evaluation would include the following:

1. Community surveys sent out at regular intervals. Results collated by librarian for consideration by Board of Management.
2. Annual Report presented at Annual General Parents' Meeting each November. Statistics for previous year are included, and register of stock.
3. Statistics for the State's public libraries published annually.

South Australia's unique system of politically mandated school community libraries (Bundy 1997) provided an opportunity for Amey (1984) to develop and test an evaluation plan for those libraries. That plan remains the only known framework for joint use library evaluation. It has been revised and updated for this article. The approach taken by the plan is validated by the literature on education evaluation, especially by Stufflebeam and Shinkfield's seminal text, *Systematic Evaluation: A Self-Instructional Guide to Theory and Practice* (1985). This work describes and critiques various evaluation methodologies, most interestingly Stufflebeam's own improvement-oriented evaluation, in which it is contended that evaluations should foster improvement, provide accountability, and promote increased understanding of the situation under review. As he states, "The most important purpose of evaluation is not to prove but to improve . . . We cannot be sure that our goals are worthy unless we can match them to the needs of the people they are intended to serve" (p. 151). Stufflebeam's methodology emphasizes ongoing evaluation, something very congruent with Amey's joint use library evaluation plan.

The approach can be complemented by the balanced scorecard approach first proposed by Kaplan and Morton (1992) in the *Harvard*

Business Review. This concept has been successfully applied in a number of libraries. While it does not assist a library in developing strategy and goals or process improvement, it is a series of four or five indicators that tells a library how it is doing. The goal of a library's balanced scorecard is to identify a set of measures that reflect future performance, with objectives and measures chosen from its vision and strategy. No joint use library is yet using a balanced scorecard approach to evaluation, although the library literature about it is increasing (Matthews, 2002).

Issues in Evaluating Joint Use Libraries

Summative Evaluation

Evaluation tends to be either summative or formative. Summative evaluation is administered at a single point in time, often at the end of a program or when brought about by internal or external, or both, pressures. The intent of summative evaluation is to assess and make an overall judgement about the worth of a library. This approach generally emphasizes comparison. In the case of a conventional school or public library, a comparison of the library being evaluated is made against quantitative and increasingly qualitative standards established by the relevant professional association. Inputs, such as the number of volumes in the collection or the physical space available, are checked to see if they conform to the required standard.

Standards and Joint Use Libraries

Standards for joint use libraries do not exist. The uniqueness of most joint use situations militates against the creation of standards and general evaluation criteria for them. Variation among joint use libraries in such fundamental areas as clientele, siting, size, staffing, administration, and funding make the application of a single set of evaluative criteria extremely unlikely. By their nature, joint use libraries are often innovative in development and individual in their response to a particular situation. Therefore, they also resist meaningful benchmarking against other libraries.

Attempts have been made to resolve this dilemma by cutting the joint use library in two and making separate comparisons against established quantitative and qualitative standards for school libraries and for public libraries. Although this approach has merit, it is not sufficient in itself, for it overlooks the synergistic achievements that should grow out of the corporate nature of a joint use library.

In addition to issues resulting from the lack of joint use standards, there are other weaknesses in conventional evaluation. The few in-depth evaluations of joint use libraries reported in the literature seem to have been costly in terms of time and staff involvement. They have almost invariably been single efforts, carried out once and never repeated. Without periodic

repetition and complementary ongoing evaluation, therefore, they have been of limited practical use in the overall development and improvement of the library.

Formative Evaluation

Formative evaluation is an ongoing process. It occurs during the activity and is intended to guide decision making and to shape the improvement and future of the library being evaluated. This dynamic approach examines the inputs and outputs, components, and achievements of the library. It also looks at the processes involved and the total program of the library. It attempts to examine the library's activities and the relationships between these activities and the population served. This is done on a more or less continuous basis and provides a diagnostic approach to a library's development.

There are problems with all methods of evaluation, not the least of which has to do with the availability of time, staff, and funds to support the process. However, certain characteristics should be present in any plan of assessment for joint use libraries.

What Is Required

The following are necessary for a joint use library assessment plan:

- *Continuity:* Rather than one-time or infrequent evaluation, a method that provides an ongoing assessment of the performance and progress of the library should be used. Such an approach will serve as a planning instrument capable of providing goals and objectives with which to guide library development.
- *Versatility:* Joint use libraries are often specific in their response to a situation. An assessment plan must therefore acknowledge the social, political, and economic situation in which the joint use library is operating. Such an approach should allow a meaningful assessment in a way that is not possible by a simple comparison with a general set or sets of standards.
- *Flexibility:* It is also necessary that any evaluative approach is adaptable enough for use with different types of joint use facilities, ranging from a library staffed by many professionals and situated in a large, multipurpose community center, to a small library managed by one professional in a rural school.
- *Practicability:* An evaluative process must be practical and feasible. Libraries have finite resources. The time, staffing, and economic commitment required for the kind of evaluation sometimes envisioned by researchers may simply not be available.

A well-facilitated, full-scale evaluation, involving user and nonuser surveys, determination of user preferences and perceptions of services, use patterns, program and circulation statistics, collection assessment, development of joint use input and output measures, and other types of

analysis, is always a valuable investment. However, the small size, low staffing numbers, level of supervision, and location of many joint use libraries may not allow for such an evaluation program. This is particularly true if evaluation is not provided for in the formal agreement.

A Plan for Assessing Joint Use Libraries

Summary

The assessment plan should proceed in steps.

- *Goals*: At the outset, those areas of the library's operation on which most attention needs to be focused are made explicit. The result is a conscious listing of the library's most important goals.
- *Critical Success Factors*: The next step is to identify those factors most critical to the attainment of the library's goals, the critical success factors (CSFs). These are the things that must be done well for the library to succeed.
- *Action Plan*: Following this, a list is compiled of strategies to be undertaken in support of the critical success factors. This is the action plan.
- *Measures of Success*: It is then necessary to assess the effectiveness of the actions taken. This is accomplished by the application of appropriate measures.
- *Annual Progress Report*: Finally, an annual progress report is produced to describe the library's performance and to signal the beginning of a new cycle in which new, or extended, goals, CSFs, and measures are formulated.

The Critical Success Factors Method

Sometimes an organization, such as a library, reaches a stage where it is almost self-perpetuating. In runs along from year to year without its vision, mission, and goals being reviewed or even known. The library manager and other library staff may be hard-pressed to find breathing space to step back and take a fresh look at their library.

The evaluation process presented here describes a method to raise the consciousness of library staff, and others associated with the library, about its objectives. This approach, the *Critical Success Factors (CSF) Method,* encourages a reappraisal of where the library is headed and where it can be improved. It also brings together the participants and requires them to share perceptions of the joint use library's role, objectives, and possible improvements.

Background to the Critical Success Factors Method

The CSF Method has been used successfully as a management tool by business corporations. It is a straightforward but potent means of analysis that can be used to assist a library manager to systematically isolate and

clarify those CSFs necessary for the successful operation of the library. The critical success factors are those few areas in which things must go well for the library to flourish. If the results are satisfactory in those areas, the evaluation confirms the successful performance of the library. If the results are unsatisfactory, the library's performance will be inadequate.

The CSF Method raises the consciousness of managers and focuses their attention upon the vital areas under their management. Once the library manager isolates those factors necessary for success, the evaluative procedures and reports required to monitor the library's progress can then be implemented.

A virtue of the CSF Method is its flexibility. It can be applied to joint use libraries regardless of their size, complexity, or special characteristics. The approach is practical, rather than academic or idealistic, and it need not be too technical. The analysis develops out of the social, political, and economic environment in which the joint use library is established, and it focuses on individual managers and their information needs.

Assessors: The Role of the Facilitators

The following approach may be used in different ways depending upon the size and staffing of the library. It lends itself to the accumulation of data, so that the views of managers and participants at various levels, and representing different constituencies, may be obtained. Where a school community library is large and employs a teacher-librarian, or a school media specialist, and a public librarian, an internal assessment can be carried out with the professionals determining the goals and CSFs for their primary area of responsibility. Subsequently, the teacher-librarian and the public librarian will come together and repeat the process to evolve the corporate goals, CSFs, an action plan, and success measures for the library.

A variation of this approach, more suitable for small school-community libraries in which management is handled solely by a teacher-librarian, is for the assessment process to be guided by an external facilitator or facilitators. The teacher-librarian in small school-community libraries may already be required to wear three hats, those of teacher, school librarian, and public librarian. It would be unrealistic to expect her or him to assume, as well, the role of assessor. It is also very important that the public library is properly represented in the process. This is because joint use libraries tend to fail because they do not meet the expectations of the public, not because they do not meet the needs of the educational community. Public library input may not be easily achieved in an institution so clearly sited and managed in the education domain. It is here that an outside facilitator or facilitators with knowledge of public library service can ensure a broader perspective.

The task of the facilitator(s) is to guide the process described below. In the initial stages, independent interviews would be held with the teacher-

librarian and the school principal. The librarian and the principal, in addition to being school personnel, are also members of the community, and they could be expected to reflect community interest in their analysis of the library's goals. However, the assessment process is enhanced if a community representative not employed at the school is consulted.

Application of the CSF Method

Application of the CSF Method does not require much time, and therefore it should not interfere with the normal library routine. In step 1, setting goals, the method is initially from the school library perspective, and it is then repeated from the public library viewpoint. That is, the facilitator will interview the same people twice to obtain their views on what constitute the most important goals of the school library and of the public library. The corporate goals of the school community library will be dealt with at a later stage.

Step 1: Setting Goals

The Goals of the School Library The facilitator separately interviews the teacher-librarian, the school principal, and the chairperson of the local board of management. In each case the facilitator will encourage the interviewee to identify and list the school library's most important goals for the coming year. These should be goals that are applicable, attainable, and prioritized. A hypothetical school library situation and its goals are described below.

> The school library serves a K-12 school of 300 students. It is part of a joint use facility in a small rural community. The teacher-librarian is aware that many of the boys, in particular, are nonreaders or reluctant readers. They use the library infrequently, and then primarily to use the Internet or the game station, or as a place to study, with little reading or borrowing taking place. Another area of concern is the lack of involvement of the teaching staff with the information literacy development of their students, and their reluctance to embed information literacy in the curriculum. A partial list of the library's goals would include growth in students' reading interest; teacher involvement with the library; and greater awareness of the importance of information literacy development.

The Goals of the Public Library After the goals for the school library are identified, the facilitator repeats the process, asking the participants individually about what they see as the most important goals for the public library. That is, the interviewees will be encouraged to identify those goals that are most important for the library's operation as a public library. These are listed on a priority basis. A hypothetical public library situation and its goals are described below.

> The teacher-librarian, manager of a joint use library in a small rural community, is concerned about the low use made of it by some community groups. There are few seniors registered as users, although demographically they are significant and increasing. The librarian has heard that seniors feel the school community library is too far away for them to reach easily; parking is a problem because of competition from teachers and students; no open hours beyond school hours are provided; and they are uncertain about their entitlement to enter the school to use the library. Another group of nonusers is farmers in the area, who have no awareness that the library has informational and recreational resources of use to them and who can only use the library after school hours, when it is currently not open. Goals for the library would include greater library awareness and use by seniors and by local farmers.

Step 2: Identifying Critical Success Factors

The CSFs are those areas in which the library must perform well in order to ensure it reaches its goals. The facilitator interviews each of the participants to obtain their perceptions of the CSFs underlying each of their goals.

The CSFs of the School Library Alongside the list of goals developed, a list is made of what each interviewee sees as the critical factors influencing the attainment of each goal for the school library (see Table 1).

Once the parallel list of goals and CSFs is completed, time is given to review it, preferably in consultation with the teachers and library assistants. Discussion can be focused on the relationship between the goals and the CSFs. On further consideration of the above, it may be possible to combine, eliminate, or restate goals and CSFs.

The CSFs of the Public Library The above procedure is repeated, with the facilitator leading each of the participants to consider those factors most relevant to the public library's success. These should be reviewed and recorded. An example of such a listing is given in Table 2.

Step 3: Establishing Corporate Goals and Critical Success Factors

This step, and those that follow, deal with overall school-community library concerns. Having considered the institution in its separate aspects, as a school library and as a public library, the participants are now asked to look at the broader corporate concerns of the joint use library. Therefore, the facilitator arranges a group session in which the teacher-librarian and the community representative work together to isolate those goals that are seen as most important for the school community library as a whole. These are listed by priority. They may repeat or resemble the lists of goals identified for the school library and the public library. It is possible, for example, that particular school or public library goals, although important in their own right, will not make the short list of the most important goals for the school community library.

Table 1. Example of School Library Goals and CSFs

Goals	Critical Success Factors
Growth in students' reading interest	Greater interest in collection Increased borrowing More use of materials in the library Requests for new materials
Teacher involvement with the library	Increased contacts with teachers
Greater awareness of the importance of information literacy	More class use of library Additional requests for materials and involvement of librarian Invitations to librarian to participate in resource-based planning, information literacy development, and curriculum meetings

Next to the list of goals is recorded what the group feels are the CSFs underlying the attainment of the goals. Once again the list is discussed and reviewed, with consultation encouraged between the parties by the facilitator, to ensure as accurate and as focused a listing as possible.

Step 4: Developing an Action Plan

At this point there should be a clear picture of the joint use library's goals and CSFs. The next step is a plan of action. Table 3 gives an example.

The formation of an action plan should draw upon the strength of the whole group, with all participants contributing ideas and suggestions on how to meet the CSFs.

Step 5: Designing Measures of Success

To assess the effectiveness of the action plan, measures of success are needed. It is sometimes only after an action plan has been carried out that

Table 2. Example of Public Library Goals and CSFs

Goals	Critical Success Factors
Greater library awareness and use by seniors	Overcoming resistance to location More inviting atmosphere Publicizing services More appealing collection More convenient hours and access Greater outreach efforts
Greater library awareness and use by local farmers	Making relevant resources and services known More convenient hours and access Greater perception of library's usefulness

Table 3. Example of a School-Community Library Action Plan

Goals	Critical Success Factors	Action plan
Growth in students' reading interests	Greater interest in the collection	Acquisition of more new young adult paperbacks
	Increased borrowing	Improved magazine and newspaper collection
	More in-library use of materials	Book talk programs
	Requests for new materials	Suggestion box established, and online suggestions introduced
		Increased displays
		Survey of reading interests
		Students interviewed
		Student representatives on board of management
Greater library awareness and use by seniors	Overcoming resistance to location	Personal invitation to coffee at the library
	Inviting atmosphere	Provision of coffee-making facilities
		Purchase of easy chairs
		Installation of electronic entrance doors
		Reducing shelving heights for easier access
	Publicizing services	Publicity in local stores, newspapers, and radio
	Outreach efforts	Visits with meals-on-wheels
	Convenient hours and access	Survey of needs, interests, hours
		Evening hours twice a week
		More parking spots for library users
	Appealing collection	Enrichment of large print and recorded books collections
Greater library awareness and use by local farmers	Making relevant resources and services known	Librarian speaks at Farmers Federation on library services
	More convenient hours and access	Survey of farm families on opening hours and access
	Greater perception of library's usefulness	Publicity in local stock journal and on radio farming programs

the challenge of how to record its success or failure is faced. The measures needed, and how they will be collected, should be decided before the action plan is implemented. In this way, measures can be tailored to provide the information required.

The most common assessment measures sought are input, process or cost efficiency, and output. There is an increasing emphasis in libraries and elsewhere on the last of these, output measures. Input measures record what the library receives from the community—the elements that make the library service possible. Examples are the number of resources in the collection, size of budget, staffing numbers, and space available. Depending upon the joint use library's individual CSF lists and action plans, some of the general input measures commonly collected by smaller libraries for central

agencies may only need to be refined to allow for an exact assessment of specific action plans. For example, if the library has included "enhancing the young adult collection" in its plan to encourage greater use of the library, general information collected on the number of paperback titles acquired and the number of magazine subscriptions might be refined to show the number of young adult paperback titles acquired and the number of young adult magazine subscriptions.

In another instance an entirely new type of input measure may have to be created. If a library takes as a goal "the support of a new English-as-a-second-language program for immigrants and refugees," some of the measures of success might include expenditure on a new area for language instruction, costs for recording and other equipment, and investment in a foreign language acquisition and cataloging workshop for the librarian.

Further examples are given below of the hypothetical joint use library and its goals, CSFs, action plan, and measures of success. These examples serve to show the plan as it should be fully developed. In each case the measures should be keyed to the library's action plan. The facilitator can assist in this process by describing measures that have been adapted and used in other joint use libraries.

The other type of measure increasingly attempted is an output measure—what the library gives to its community. Output measures are indicators of the services resulting from library activity, their quantity or character. Examples are program attendance, loans, and reference transactions. A more recent indicator for public libraries is contribution to the social capital of the community served, the qualitative measurement of which is still evolving. The output measures should flow directly from the library's action plan. Again, these measures may be readily obtained by refining output data already commonly collected. For example, general statistics on registrations, loans, and program attendance are probably already collected. If, however, increased use by seniors is sought, then the above outputs might have to be modified to give registrations, loans, and attendance by age.

In other cases, new measures may be needed to describe the library's activities and impact. An example might be where a new joint use library is established on a school or college campus in a town long served by a centrally located, but poor, public library. Despite the greatly improved space, attractiveness, resources, and hours of operation of the new library, some resistance by public library users to using the joint use library could be anticipated. If the joint use library took as one of its goals public involvement, a measure would be comparing the active membership of the former public library with the registered active borrowers from the joint use library. The measure of success would be expressed as a percentage of the public library members who had elected to become joint use library members. Other output measures related to the above situation might include information obtained by interviewing public library members about

their perceptions of the new library or an account of a social activity to attract members to it.

Meaningful output measures are not as common as input measures, and they are more difficult to determine. This is because a library's impact on learning, on the community, and on the quality of life of individuals cannot be readily quantified. Public libraries, for example, are unique as multifaceted community agencies. They endeavor to meet the needs of the entire population from "cradle to grave," and typically at least 50 percent of the population use them regularly. Nonetheless, there is a strengthening consensus, to use Matarasso's words, that "Library services need more effective and meaningful methods of monitoring, assessing and reporting on their wider value to the society" (1998, p. 45).

In recent years, therefore, considerable attention has been given to the approaches to measuring outputs and impacts of school, academic, and public libraries. These measures comprise quantitative and, more recently qualitative, outputs, such as how school libraries contribute to learning, literacy, and information literacy, and public libraries to social capital and the quality of life of individual people. Joint use libraries, in bringing complementary agencies in the community into formal partnership, clearly can make a special contribution to social capital by what Goulding describes as "promoting the types of interaction and integration which enable social networking" (2004, p. 3). Measures such as these are time consuming to assess but are particularly applicable to the suggested joint use library external review every five to seven years.

The approach described above is not the only way to evaluate a joint use library. However, as Dwyer observed, when this method was implemented in South Australia,

> The local library authorities responsible for the services which have undertaken the process have reacted favourably, have set achievable goals and have committed themselves to a continuous process and regular reporting. They have an effective mechanism for documenting progress and failures and for reassessing priorities. Of paramount significance is that the library has a means of keeping in touch with its communities, to access progress in satisfying their needs and to set targets in support of meeting their changing requirements. (1987, p. 612)

The authors have also used the major elements of this evaluation methodology for over fifteen years to facilitate reviews of joint use libraries and have commenced the second round of evaluations of some of them.

Conclusion

Joint use libraries are indeed libraries "like no others." They require special people to lead their development and evaluation. Experience shows that, if the staff of a new joint use library are not fully engaged with the concept, and committed to its success, the library will not flourish.

It may even fail. It is for this reason that joint use library staff at all levels should be carefully selected and inducted. They need experience in time management, advocacy, marketing, organization, and diplomacy, and, most importantly, they need to have an enthusiasm for the concept of a shared library. Public librarians, for example, are sometimes troubled—for good reason—with the location of the joint use library. Public libraries are best sited in, or close to, retail and community centers. This is rarely where educational institutes are located. When a joint use library is sited in an out-of-the-way location, the public librarian will have to be energetic and innovative in developing ways to attract users.

Joint use libraries are one of the most demanding, and potentially stressful, areas of professional employment. However, much of that stress can be minimized by attention to an endorsed, ordered, and transparent program of internal and external evaluation in order to

- improve performance and progress of the joint use library;
- ensure that the synergistic advantages of a joint use library—that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts—are realized as much as possible;
- identify, and draw awareness to, issues and concerns before any become critical.

The need for such an evaluation program should be explored and resolved in the early planning for a joint use library and specified in the joint use library agreement, with the following provisions:

- Ongoing formative evaluation as proposed in this article
- An external review of the library at the end of its first three years, focused on quantitative *and* qualitative output measures
- After the first three-year external review, a cycle of external reviews every five to seven years, again focused on quantitative *and* qualitative output measures

More than any other type of library, joint use libraries are vulnerable to dysfunctionality, and even to complete failure. However, there are many, and increasing, examples of joint use libraries that are very heavily used, innovative, and warming manifestations of community vision, partnership, and professional commitment to collaboration. Experience suggests that early investment in an ordered program of evaluation—together with the selection of the right staff—is the best guarantor of a durable joint use library, and one that is truly greater than the sum of its parts.

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